



# LIBYA NEWS UPDATE

Tuesday, 1 June, 2021

## MALTA'S SHIPMENT OF 1.2 BILLION RUSSIAN-MADE DINARS TO EASTERN LIBYA THREATENS COUNTRY'S STABILITY



The Foreign Minister of Malta has announced that the country is ready to ship to eastern Libya 1.2 billion Russian-made counterfeit Libyan dinars which it confiscated two years ago. The shipment was originally halted as a result of pressure from the U.S. State Department. The shipment, worth \$1.5 billion, was seized by Maltese authorities in 2019 when it was in transit to eastern Libya. The money had been found stored inside two containers and was believed to be destined for forces commanded by General Khalifa Haftar, who at that time was laying siege to the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

The recent announcement was made during a working visit to the Russian Federation, where Malta's Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Evarist Bartolo held a bilateral meeting with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

If the money arrives in eastern Libya, there is a serious risk that it will be used to deepen existing polarization of state financial institutions and potentially fund armed conflict. As such, the announcement is a significant concern for the Government of National Unity (GNU), which seeks to maintain the October 2020 ceasefire agreement, support Libya's reconstruction, and lead the country into democratic elections this December.



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## RUSSIAN SCUD MISSILES TO BE USED IN HAFTAR PARADE



Last week, Gaddafi-era Scud missiles refurbished by Russia were photographed in Benina Airport in eastern Libya. Used during the attack on Tripoli in 2019, these weapons were reportedly used in a military parade organized by Haftar to mark the anniversary of the war.

Haftar's decision to hold the military parade has been widely viewed as an attempted provocation and threat of force against the GNU and fragile peace in the country.